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LETTER DATED 15 JULY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LEBANON TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to inform you that the Lebanese Government has decided to request the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which expires on 31 July 1991, for a further period of six months, on the basis of the provisions of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 501 (1982), 508 (1982), 509 (1982) and of all other relevant resolutions and decisions of the Security Council.

Since the last renewal of the mandate of UNIFIL, the Lebanese Government has extended its authority beyond the greater Beirut area towards the north, east and south, thus ushering in a new dawn of peace for most of the nation. In accordance with the timetable of the Taif agreement, militias previously operating in these areas have successfully been disbanded and their weapons turned in to the Lebanese Army, thus ensuring the return of stability and security. One exception to Lebanon's success remains however, and that is in the most southern region of the country, where Israel imposes its reign of terror over the civilian population. This occupation has been allowed to continue for 13 years now, in blatant violation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and subsequent resolutions and decisions of the United Nations.

The Lebanese Government is sparing no effort to extend its sovereignty over southern Lebanon, in fulfilment of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). In the last two weeks, the Lebanese Army has also been successfully deployed in the Sidon and Tyre regions adjacent to the city of Jezzine and the UNIFIL area of operation, where it is actively collecting armaments from all Lebanese and non-Lebanese groups. It is the intention of the Lebanese Government to progressively assume responsibility for security in UNIFIL's present area of deployment, a process which will make it possible for UNIFIL to deploy down to the international border.

In the wake of all these positive steps, and at a time when the Lebanese Government has delivered the nation unto a process of normalization, Israel has amplified its refusal to withdraw from southern Lebanon in accordance with

Security Council resolution 425 (1978). It has stepped up its efforts to impede and thwart any attempt to restore peace and stability to Lebanon, and has recently intensified its aggressions by extending its attacks beyond the occupied zone to areas surrounding the major cities of Sidon and Tyre. High Israeli officials such as the Defence Minister and the Defence Ministry's Coordinator for Lebanese Affairs are declaring publicly that they have no intention whatsoever of withdrawing from the so-called "security zone" and the Jezzine area, and will continue to strengthen Israel's proxy militia in the south of Lebanon.

At a time when the United Nations is witnessing growing strength as part of the new world order, and at a time when the Security Council has recently demonstrated its resolve and leverage in implementing international law as embodied in the Charter, it is no longer acceptable that the blatant occupation of southern Lebanon be allowed to stand in violation of the United Nations Charter as well as numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions. Lebanon demands the prompt implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

In this context, the presence of UNIFIL continues to remain of utmost necessity to provide much needed assistance and support for the civilian population faced with the violent and arbitrary nature of Israeli occupation. However, this assistance cannot be a substitute for the fulfilment of UNIFIL's original mandate as set forth in Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which is to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli Forces from Lebanon and to assist the Government of Lebanon, through its armed forces, in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area.

The Lebanese Government takes this opportunity to pay tribute to the UNIFIL command, troops and administrators, and to the troop-contributing countries for their efforts and sacrifices in serving the cause of peace. It also expresses its deep appreciation for the tireless endeavours of the Secretary-General and his aides, which are instrumental in the valuable presence and work of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon.

(Signed) Dr. Khalil MAKKAWI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative